

that to many People, I have seemed to falsify my Word and Promise, which I made my being discharged out of Bethlem Hospital; whereupon I am now liable to the Imputation of a Lyar and Deceiver (which lies as a very great Prejudice against the Things I heretofore written, and Published to the World) I shall therefore here add the very thereof; Together with what is here observed thereon.

The Right Honourable Daniel Earl of N. Principal Secretary of State.

Humble PETITION of Richard Stafford, a Prisoner in Bethlehem Hospital.

SHewETH,

THAT your Petitioner hath been detained here for almost these eight Months, By an Order of the Board of Green Cloth, for disturbing Their Majesties Household at Kensington; By my delivery of certain Books there, on Nov. 3. 1691. for which this my Act of Inadvertency, I am heartily sorry; And I do hereby with all due Respectfulness and Humility beg Their Majesties Pardon, for what Offence I have hereby given to them. And seeing that by so long and tedious Imprisonment, I have been, and am still detained and kept from the publick Worship and Service of Almighty God: As from the Comforts and Ends of Humane Life. My humble Prayer is therefore unto your Lordship, that you would intercede with Her Majesty, That She would be Graciously pleased, out of Her Princely Favour (and upon this my Acknowledgment, and future Resolution) to give Command or Direction, for my Release and Discharge out of this House of Confinement and Shame; and to grant me my former Liberty and Freedom (which last Words, tho they were not expressed, yet they were intended in my Mind) And I do hereby promise before God, and upon the Word of a Christian man, That I will never any more come within the Gates of White-Hall or Kensington Court: Nor, will I Write and Publish any thing more against the Government, as it is at present Established. Adding this withal, That if ever I should Transgress or Violate in the least particular against what I do here declare, and faithfully promise, I would then willingly submit to be Immur'd up here, or else-where during Life. Or to be proceeded against in a Regular and Legal way, with the utmost severity, according as your Righteousness and Wisdom shall think fit. But my Intentions being now Real and Unfeigned, as above-specified. I do hope that I may for this once partake of Royal Mercy. And that your Lordship would be pleased to Represent and make this known, is the most earnest Desire, and Supplication of

Your most Obedient Servant,

And Humble Petitioner,

Richard Stafford.

These Words, *To be Immur'd up here or else where during Life*. I did like the eloquent Orator me Isa. 3. 3. put in to make this my Petition more Persuasive. But not with an intent to concluded to be dealt withal accordingly

This Petition was carried and presented unto him, On June 20. Upon which the day following following Order was sent, and directed unto Sir William Turner, and to the other Governours of Hospital.

June 21. 1692.

Gentlemen,

The Queen is willing to discharge Mr. Richard Stafford out of Bethlehem Hospital to deliver him up to his Father.

Your Humble Servant

N.

BY this General phrase of delivering me up to my Father, there was no such Grant of my former ty and Freedom; Upon which my solemn Promise was founded.

But (not laying so much stress on that) then besides, If a Promise is as it were forced and extorted, as it was with me by Grievous foregoing Bondage and Oppression, in putting me down into a low, dark, narrow, and Room, for seven Weeks and three days. And so in like manner, in the former Times of Usurpation, They did weary out Judge Jenkins, by long Imprisonment. By which they forced him to sign a Paper, he did much more acknowledge their Government that then was, than I have done as to the present form of Petition. Or if the matter of a Promise is unlawful, as here it is to hinder the Word of the Lord and to stop that free course thereof, which it ought to have. In both these cases it ceases to oblige; As yet more clearly understood from the Contents of the following Letter, which was delivered in and the Penny-post, on July 29 last past, and directed to him at Cleveland House, near St. James, but superscribed.

To the Right Honourable Daniel Earl of N. Principal Secretary of State, and to other Members of the Privy Council.

Richard Stafford, a Scribe of Jesus Christ, sendeth Greeting.

THese are to acquaint Your Lordships, and the present Rulers, That I have had very great Trouble and Remorse of Conscience (being afraid and sensible, That I have offended God in an high degree for that Petition which I sent unto Your Lordship, on the 19th of June last past: Wherein I did pray for my discharge out of Bethlehem Hospital, and you were pleased to send an Order accordingly for it the following; which, though it was an Act of great Goodness in your self to be instrumental towards the ending of it; and it was, and is still very acceptable unto me: And I do hereby resent it with all due Thankfulness; Yet the terms upon which I did desire it, were in me sinful and unbecoming such an One who is employed in the ministration of the word of the Lord unto the Inhabitants of the Earth. For whereas rather from the dictation of some other than from mine own Sentiments) I did there set forth and promise, that what I had done as to the occasion of my Commitment was in me an Act of Inadvertency; And that I would write and publish no more against the Government as it is at present Established (I do not write against Government in the General but against Sin, Iniquity and Transgression in the present Governours) That aforementioned dropped, was as it were forced from me by Humane Infirmary, and out of my impatient desire of Release from that and tedious Imprisonment, under which I did groan. But now upon my serious and innermost Thoughts

in Truth acknowledge so. And I learn from the Example of *Jeremiah*, That when through the harassing and Persecution of Men, He came to this Resolution, *Then I said* (which implies some-
 of an outward Promise) I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name. *But his*
was in mine Heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could
Jer. 20. 9. In like-manner, I since finding such strong Impulses of this Nature upon my Spirit, and by
 may be further gathered from *Numbers 30. 2.* Seeing that the Spirit of God in my Heart did at the
 the disallow what I did herein, as He did at the very same moment to the Spirit of my Mind: Not
 those Vows or Bonds wherewith I have seemed to tie my self shall stand; and the Lord shall forgive
 because his Spirit did disallow what I did herein, as he did at the very same moment to the Spirit of my
 For the Vow of a Woman or Wife shall not bind her, if her Father or her Husband doth disallow the
 much more all those Promises made unto Men shall no further oblige, than saving our Duty to the
 God over all.

And though in Probability if ye had known as much before hand, ye would have still kept me Captive, and
 let me go, as now upon my giving this Notice hereof, Ye will be apt to relapse me into the same or a
 Condition; Yet I should have all along, and I am still to commit my Cause unto God, with only warn-
 all of thus much before hand, *viz.* seeing that all which I have done as Relating to publick Affairs
 my Reproof of Transgression, and exhorting People to come again into the way of God's Commandments.
 to set his Laws before Mankind, and I do Publish his eternal Truth. I do nothing more, beyond, or besides
 which again I do not out of mine own Head, but only from of the Statute Book of the Lord God. If
 think that I deserve to be imprisoned for this Doing, and ye will be instrumental to Confine me, God will
 that ye and the other People do deserve Damnation, for not obeying those his Laws and Command-
 ments, which from out of the same Book of Scriptures I have set before Ye and Them. And ye will re-
 ceive yet greater Condemnation, and be beaten with more stripes for your thus doing towards me his Crea-
 ture, who was sent and employed by him in the Ministration of his Word and Truth. This ye will be likely
 find severally, as soon as your Breath is out of your Nostrils, and your Souls are departed from your Bo-
 dies. God will proportion his Punishment, and Recompence according to the number of the days in the
 which ye have already, or shall yet hold me in adversity, and according to what ever degree, or manner of
 persecution ye have already, or shall use yet towards me.

Though I will most strictly observe that part of my Engagement, as never to come again within the Gates
 of *White-Hall* or *Kensington-House*, unless I am sent for; Yet I would again appear boldly in Person: But
 what ye lately did towards me, was a meer Act of Violence, *viz.* such as was neither Law nor Reason for,
 but only Gotten Power, and the Will of Men. It was so done meerly because ye were stronger; and it could
 be so done. If I may use such a trivial Similitude, It was like a Company of Boys who did take one of their
 fellows, and bind him Hand and Foot, and lock him up in a Room by force. Which, what sometimes they
 do for once out of Novelty and Play; Ye did it for several Days and Weeks successively with me; and this
 is called the Government of Reasonable (or rather unreasonable) Men; and herein I may lawfully use those
 necessary and prudential Preventives in keeping out of your way.

If by the Words of God's Grace and Truth I might be somewhat instrumental to bring that to Right,
 which is now overturn'd already, and to settle Peace in your Consciences, who now live in fear and doubt, un-
 til ye miscarry to all Eternity (unless ye come to Repentance and Restitution) then I shall neither harm nor
 disturb ye. And if ye would refrain from hurting my outward Person, ye would have less guilt in the mean
 while, and less punishment in the World to come, which we are all just entering into.

To this end is the inclosed Written Paper sent unto ye. The Words whereof (whether stifted or publish-
 ed) will be for some Witness and Testimony. By reason of my poor wretched Condition; and also Mr. *Robert*
Stephens hath given such strict Orders from ye to the several Printers against doing any thing for me,
 That the will of Man is of more force in this World, than the Command of God, as to the going forth
 and publication of his Eternal Truth. I do doubt, and am afraid, that I shall never get it printed (and yet
 blessed be God who performeth all things for me) it afterwards was printed, and is Entituled, *A Word to both*
Houses of Parliament, and to the Privy Council.

However ye may Order it to be Printed, or a sufficient Number of Copies of to be Transcribed. I send it on Purpose that those Lives might be which are now going to be lost in their Invasion of a foreign Country; for 'tis fits at the *Council Board*, who do cause, contrive, and carry on the War; those many Men, Ships, and Horses may be turned about according to the Orders of ye who sit at the Helm, whithersoever the present Governours list.

Follow Peace, and Righteousness, and true Holiness; for there is no other under Heaven whereby ye may be saved; and in the mean while,

Fare

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